/394 cont./

372 occupants of the hut more room for their beds. At this time they do not want leaping flames, but a steady glow that gives out an even heat and does not endanger either the hut or the sleepers. Abundant ashes prevent it from going out before morning. The occupants lie down around the fire in no particular order, eager to enjoy its comfort. That is why there is restless movement in this tangle of sleeping human beings all night long, for each one turns and twists this way and that.

374 Despite their being accustomed to the unavoidable smoke, these Indians are not insensitive to it; indeed they regard it as an annoyance and bad for the eyes (56). Often they can find only

56. Hyades (f) :559, too, admits that despite all caution "their fire does not burn without giving off smoke, which is often quite thick and is very annoying to them, in spite of their being accustomed to it" /translated from French/. Fitz-Roy is absolutely right when speaking of their "smalleyes, suffering from smoke," he says, "their eyelids are made red and watery by the wood smoke in their wigwams" (King:175) /cited in English/.

damp wood to burn which unavoidably causes a great deal of stinging smoke. Hence /395/ the woman carefully covers those parts of the dwelling that let in the wind to whirl the smoke around inside. Although the people much prefer to have the hut entrance open toward the beach to be able to watch their canoe and the flow of the water, they alter this plan as soon as the wind disturbs their quiet fire. In the long, dome-shaped huts they leave two entrances to begin with (p. 20), closing the one or the other alternately, as the protection of the fire dictates. In spite of the best possible covering of the framework, a great deal of cold air flows in at ground level, which annoys the occupants. Hence the entire floor surface of the interior is dropped as much as 50 centimeters (p. 23). This protects the occupants from the penetrating air, while the spreading warmth of the fire, which can

/395 cont./

•377 burn quietly, is not lost. Similar advantages are afforded by a wall of mussel shells, which grows in rings in those places chosen year after year for the dwelling. Here it is superfluous to lower the ground level in the interior by excavating, because the outer wall rises above it in any case.

At times when a storm becomes particularly strong and the fire cannot be protected, the people are wrapped in a thick cloud of ashes and smoke within their hut. While this is going on, they lie flat on the ground and cover themselves with pieces of leather. Sometimes it is hours before they get up and shake off the layer of ashes from their bodies and belongings. Sometimes they must endure heavy showers of rain which make them tremble with cold. As soon as possible they again start a gaily blazing fire and move very close to it in order to get warm through and through after all their discomfort.

372 505 The Indians could not do without their fire in the canoe any more than in their hut, either by day or night, because on the water they are even more helplessly exposed to the hardships of the weather in their unfriendly homeland. They carry it with them everywhere and without exception. If heavy rain should extinguish it, they make straight for shore. The fire, narrowly confined, is laid in the middle section on a safe, partly wet layer of clumps of turf, gravel, and clods of earth (57), which prevents

57. On this subject Outes (g) :52 says only: "The fire, especially in the canoes, is maintained on stones and earth" /translated from Spanish/. Hyades (q) :304 gives more detailed statements.

it from burning through. It is kept going with short, thin pieces of wood, and they do not let high flames develop. They are constantly aware of the danger threatening the bark vessel from this fire. If the boat should rock badly, they extinguish the embers for safety's sake by pouring water from the sea over them. Even when the journey is smooth, they permit only a weak glow, and when someone wishes to warm himself, he moves closer to it. The boys and girls in any case crouch in the middle of the boat.

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372 374 The vital importance of fire as such is increased still more by its many uses. It is an unsurpassed protection chiefly against cold and dampness. What it means to these people who, day after day, almost stark naked, are exposed to rain and snow, fog and wind, salt water, and wet earth can be adequately appreciated only by someone who has personally experienced the comfort of the fire under those conditions. The fire, always available in the hut and in the canoe, thoroughly warms the parts of the body that are uncomfortable. In a few minutes the feeling of cold vanishes and the stiffness of the limbs disappears, delicate wisps of steam rise from the surface of the body which has been drenched with rain, and anyone lingering for a while at the fire is restored to life. A person who wishes to have its effect for a longer time makes a small fire beside his pallet or the place where he sits. He brings his arms or legs quite close to it or bends his head and the upper part of his body over it. Everyone who must stay too far away from the fire in the middle part of the hut provides for himself in this manner.

752 His inseparable association with fire also explains why there is scarcely a Yamana to be met who does not have scars from burns (61). Small children often injure themselves badly.

61. After direct observations Hyades (f):559 even stated: "There is not a Fuegian who does not show mottling on his body, especially on his legs, due to the effect on the skin of prolonged stays in the immediate vicinity of the fire" /translated from French/.
Bove writes (MM:XVII, 235; 1883): "Professor Spegazzini examined more than fifty Fuegians, and did not find one amongst them free from the mark of serious burns" /cited in English/.

I saw coarse scar tissue, indicating a serious injury, on the entire right leg of a grown girl, the daughter of Felipe (62).

62. In more recent times, on July 19, 1902, J. Williams (MM:XXXVI, 277; 1902) reported the death "of a woman from burns.